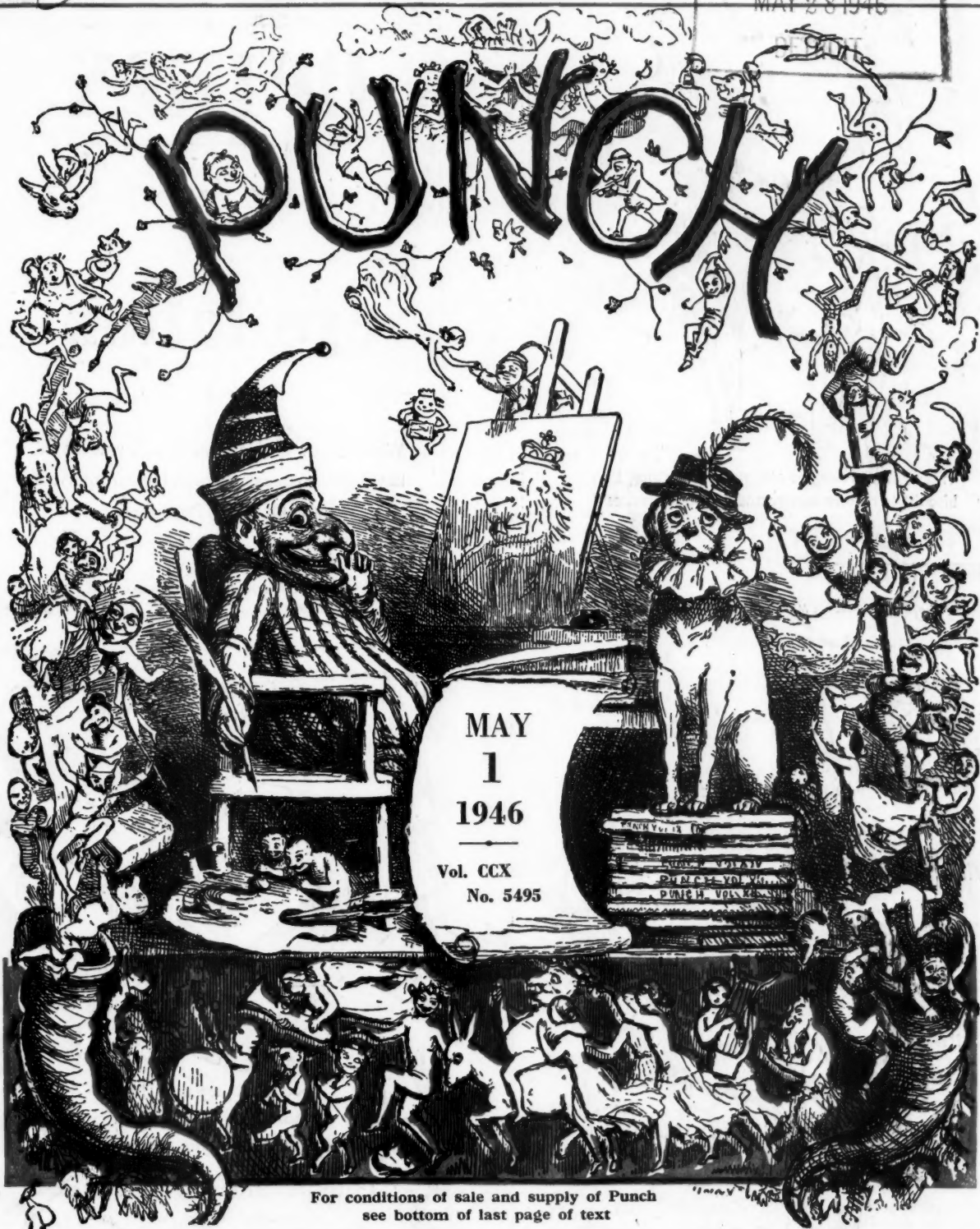


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MAY 28 1946



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**BISCUITS  
KEEP YOU GOING...**



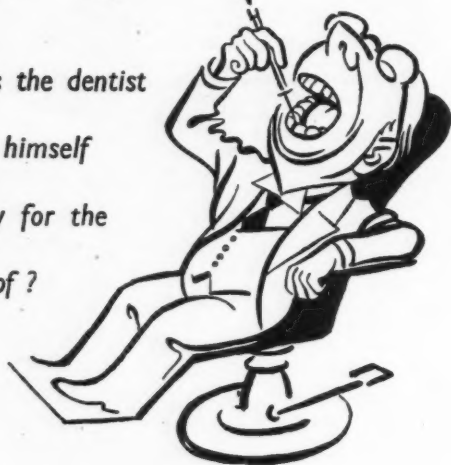
Wet or fine, young or old, there is nothing like  
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Issued by the Cake & Biscuit Manufacturers War Time Alliance Ltd.  
CVS-119



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drilling himself  
patiently for the  
return of?



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FINE SOAPS  
for Fifty Years

If patience  
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a luxurious  
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medicine chest or the latest and  
most potent drugs prescribed by  
the physician — all based on  
the manufacturing experience  
of three generations

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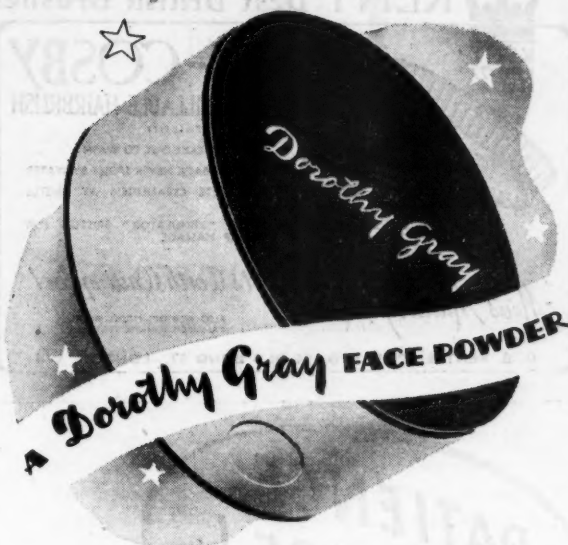
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Skin requires a specially clinging powder. Blended in a range of  
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People come here for advice for they  
know that the counsel they will  
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Tooth Paste is a fine testimony to  
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Engraving specially designed by John Farleigh

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The "FIREFLY" and other famous Shanks mowers are in production again, but supplies are somewhat limited and we cannot offer immediate deliveries just yet. Just ask your Ironmonger to put you on the waiting list — a Shanks mower is something worth waiting for!

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**IT'S THE  
TOPS.  
COPS**

**ANZORA**  
Cream & Viola  
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**HEADACHE** has one thing in common with Rheumatism, Toothache, Sleeplessness, Neuritis, Colds and 'Flu:

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There are various sorts of Headache. There is the nervous, nagging pain that worry brings on. There is the sharp, insistent misery of neuralgia. There is the over-tired reminder, at the end of a wearing day, that long hours and exacting work must be offset by proper relaxation if your health is not to suffer.

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'Genasprin' is the safe brand of aspirin that will not harm heart or digestion. And fortunately 'Genasprin' is one of the things for which it is no longer necessary to accept a substitute; you can get it from any chemist at 1/5d. and 2/3d.

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**'GENASPRIN'**  
sees you through!

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SPRATT'S also supply—For your feathered pet, SPRATT'S MILD SEEDS. For Cats and Kittens, SPRATT'S CAT FOOD.

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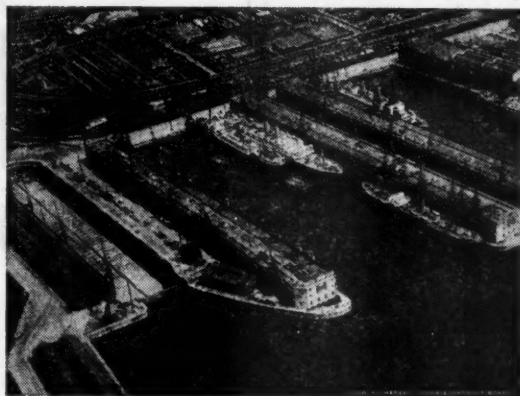
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**R. A. LISTER (MARINE SALES) LTD.**  
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**WOOL**  
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*dressing up begins*  
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**MERIDIAN**



J.B. LEWIS &amp; SONS, LTD., Nottingham. Est. 1815. Suppliers to the Wholesale Trade

**WHY NOT A BRITISH PRECISION  
MINIATURE CAMERA?**



It will be done.

Has not Britain the finest precision engineers in the world?  
Has not our scientific instrument industry beaten all comers  
in the war? Are not our lenses as good or better than any-  
thing Germany produced? We, who make the vital optical  
glass, will be proud to see such glass in the fine British  
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PEEK FREAN'S CRISP BREAD



MR. PEEK:  
'The news flies round  
from mouth to mouth'

MR. FREAN:  
'There's Vita-Weat for  
North and South.'

★ The Government zoning plan limiting the dis-  
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Made by Peek Frean & Co. Ltd., makers of famous biscuits



All good  
shoes need a  
**'NUGGET'**  
shine for extra  
smartness



SUPREME for QUALITY

In Black, Brown  
& Dark Brown



# PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCX No. 5495

May 1 1946

## Charivaria

A GEOLOGIST points out that England is now a fraction more above sea-level, while America is, correspondingly, a little less. This, no doubt, will adjust itself when Bruce Woodcock returns from the States.

"Summer holidays may mean a London theatre slump," a critic points out. Managers hope to cut their losses by selling House Full boards to seaside landladies.



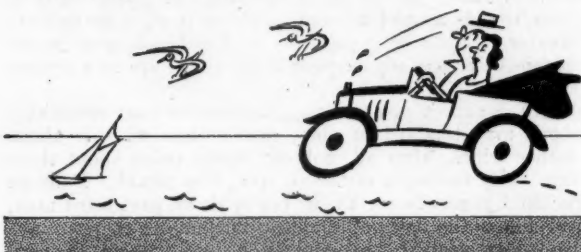
"We pay for our M.P.s," says a writer. Yes; and now they talk of putting on nearly a hundred per cent. purchase tax.

An editor is urging his holiday resort correspondents to get a little variety into their news items this year. On the principle that if a man nips a deck-chair, that's news.

Oh! Oh!

"Squadron Leader Segal, M.P. for Preston, has asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air if he was aware that a decline of interest in the A.T.S. is prevalent among boys of the upper forms in many schools, and what steps he proposed to take to maintain this interest at a higher level."—*Lancashire Daily Post*.

Reports that wheat is still being used for fuel in South America prompt a disgruntled correspondent to suggest that they exchange it for some of the coal-dust we are making our bread with over here.



A trade journal mentions a woman carpenter who can drive nails like lightning. And lightning, they say, never strikes in the same place twice.

The Ministry of Fuel and Power have already fixed the coal ration for the ensuing year. This Government certainly does get things done.

"Closed lips are the order in Delphi official quarters to-night."—*Daily paper*.

The oracles, in fact, are dumb.

"In these days of coupons, how can I make my clothes last twice as long?" asks a worried correspondent in an evening paper. Has he ever tried wearing them only half the time?

"If you drink whisky, take more water with it," advises a doctor. Beer-drinkers have been doing this for some time.



### Roll Out the Barrel!

"A BUNG. wanted by 2 ladies, Lilliput, Parkstone, Winton or Southbourne districts; 2/3 beds; will pay up to £3,500." *Advt. in local paper.*

A medical writer declares that the bracing air of our north-east coast prevents that feeling of old age and flatness. Why not take your old car tyres up there for a breath of air?



## The Queueers

**I**N the white bright light of the sun's strong shine, in the hail and the snow and the mud,  
They have queued for hake, they have queued for cake,  
and the passion is deep in their blood,  
They have queued for coke, they have queued to smoke,  
they have queued for mirth and pain,  
They have queued to be fed, they have queued to wed, they have queued to be parted again,  
They have queued to be told that nothing is sold, they have queued to be turned away,  
They have queued for tea, they have queued for the sea,  
they will queue for the Judgment Day.

There is something wrong with a surging throng that never behaves as it ought,  
And I think that Noah (though he took to drink) is the Father of Modern Thought,  
Who made long queues of the kangaroos and put the ants into files,  
And told the bears they must march in pairs and go after the crocodiles,  
And the sons of Ham still queue for jam and stand in an endless trail  
On the freezing earth for a sixpenny-worth of the frozen oil of the whale.

Now who is bound for the merry-go-round and the horses that race in pairs,  
And the Cage of Death and the bated breath of the Girls in the Lions' lairs,  
To be swung up high till they touch the sky and hustled about and hurled,

To peep at the Sleeping Beauty's sleep and the Largest Rat in the World?  
They must stand for long in the queue that's wrong and long in the queue that's right,  
As they stood in queues for the shoes they use to share in the fair's delight.

They have queued for sweets, they have queued for seats, they have queued to find a home,  
For a bit of a flat on Mount Ararat they have queued to cross the foam;  
They have queued for plans, they have queued for cans, they have spent their life in a row,  
The queue-spent hours are beyond the powers of the wisest brain to know,  
And was it the bus that was meant for us that passed like a raging bull?  
Or was it the queue that belonged to you? Nobody cares. It's full.

Form up in queues for the racing news, form up on your weary legs  
For the ocean breeze and a little cheese and the powder of aged eggs,  
Form up in lines for the one-and-nines, form up for the coster's stall,  
And those who are good and have longest stood and never complained at all  
Shall stand and wait at St. Peter's gate, and probably get their due,  
While I, no doubt, shall be marshalled out—to the end of the longer queue. EVOE.

## To a Gentleman Who Has Asked Me to Play Cricket

**I**T is very good of you to invite me to turn out for you occasionally this season, when I can be spared from my other duties.

There are perhaps one or two small matters which I should mention before a definite decision is come to about the matches in which I am actually to take part.

I have one pair of white trousers. These have been lying folded double in a cupboard for the last six years with the result that the outside of the bottom half of the left leg (which was uppermost throughout the war) is a great deal yellower than the rest of the material. You might not be prepared to believe this if you could see the right leg (say) first, but it is so. Of course when I am batting, it will not be very noticeable, because I shall have a pad on my left leg, if one of your team would not mind lending me one, that is, just for a few minutes. But when we are fielding you will have to make up your mind whether to have me close in where all the players can see or out in the deep under the eyes of the spectators. You may think that fine leg would be a useful sort of compromise, as long as there is no question of my running too often to the boundary after leg-byes.

Would faded khaki socks be all right. I have tried turning the turn-ups down but there is no doubt, quite apart from the amount of dried grass that fell out, that a fair amount of sock is going to show. Faded khaki does look more or less white, you know, in strong sunlight, and

it will tone in quite well with my shoes, which are brown Army P.T. ones, I'm afraid. It is no good whitewashing ammunition boots, tell your chaps. The whitening runs off (on account of the dubbin on the boots, I dare say) and the effect is simply a drab grey as if one had been scuffling about in thick dust. Everybody here agrees that the brown gym-shoes are better.

I have been scuffling about in thick dust, as a matter of fact, though not in ammunition boots, naturally. I was looking for a white shirt in the attic—white silk actually. I had it for a sort of Spanish costume I wore once—but some fool has cut it up to make a lamp-shade, so here again I shall have to fall back on a rather makeshift arrangement of an old dress shirt with the collar off a Rugger jersey sewn on. Of course I am having the stiffness taken out of the front and cuffs, and really it doesn't look as bad as you might expect, worn with a sweater. Cheap bone studs are best and look quite inconspicuous, in case any of your other chaps are in a similar difficulty.

Still, I expect you are more anxious to hear something about my standard of play, rather than all this about clothes which, after all, nobody thinks twice about these days. My batting is my weak spot, I'm afraid. Balls on the off I generally try to cut (away down past third man, you know the sort of stroke?), but unless they bounce up pretty high I am inclined to miss them through



### IMPERIAL FAIR

"I still see your life-lines converging."



*"Fishmonger my foot! I bet you went and caught it in the river."*

over-keenness. Balls on the leg I leave alone nowadays. In the old days I used to sweep round after them, but it never did any good. Sometimes one can put a nervous wicket-keeper off, I know, and pile up the byes, but in the ordinary way I prefer to keep my strength for cutting, and that is what I shall do unless the match depends on our getting another run or two by hook or by crook. Straight balls bowl me, by the way.

I am what is known as a *useful change bowler*, by which I mean that I often break up a stubborn partnership when every other means has been tried and failed. Slow, left-hand, round-arm, round-the-wicket stuff mostly off the leg stump. Then I deliberately over-correct, flash in a straight one and get a c. and b. though it is better for mid-off to run in and take it, if you wouldn't mind explaining that to him before the game begins. I don't rely on finger-spin or swerve or any fal-lals of that kind for my effects, so it is immaterial to me whether I bowl with the new ball or the old. All I ask is two overs, three or four men on the leg boundary, and a wicket-keeper who doesn't

keep raising his eyebrows at first-slip after every ball, as one or two I have known are a bit inclined to do.

I am definitely good at *fielding*, provided I am put at a reasonable distance from the bat and not continually badgered and bothered by being beckoned at to come in closer. Bowlers who keep crooking their forefinger at me I absolutely bar. What they fail to realize is that I make a practice of walking in *as they run up to bowl*, so that by the time the batsman makes his stroke I am where they wanted to put me in the first place. If I stand where they tell me at the start I am in an absolutely hopeless position by the time I have finished my walk-up and can do nothing but duck, which is useless to the side and looks positively silly when the ball goes in the opposite direction. As you know, to wait until you can see the direction of the stroke before covering up is simply asking for trouble.

Well, there it is, old chap. Let me know what dates you can offer me, and I will see what I can manage with all these other calls on my time. But don't expect too much from me, until I run into form.

H. F. E.



## Letter from Prague

**N**OTHING in Prague is more fascinating than its lifts.

Early one morning—early for me, that is: it was at a time when most of Prague had already been at work for an hour—I went to a block of modern flats that housed, as all blocks of flats everywhere in Europe seem to do nowadays, an offshoot of an important Government department. There was a lift—or, rather, there was a door to a lift-shaft. Behind its glass all was dark. But the door was slightly ajar.

Now, I feel that of all doors the doors to lifts should either be wide open or firmly shut. There should be no half-measures. Either the lift should be there or it shouldn't, and if the door does not tell you that, what is it there for? To keep out draughts? So I pulled at the door-knob. The door did not move. I pushed at the door. It resisted firmly, but from the shaft came a faint feminine voice, as though the goddess of the lift were protesting at this assault on her privacy.

Then the porter arrived, a powerful phlegmatic man. He wrenched the door open. Immediately lights sprang up in the shaft, a lift appeared, descending slowly, and in it was a rather attractive girl. The lift stopped. She stepped forward and at once a heavy piece of mechanism fell from the top of the door on to her head and she collapsed. The porter carried her over to a couch in the entrance hall, deposited her there and then came back to me.

"Which floor?" he said briskly, kicking the piece of mechanism to one side and stood there, waiting for me to enter.

Actually, I walked. It was only four floors up.

Then there is the lift in my hotel. It is French—not one of those open-work lifts of the hotels of Paris, airy cages that dance uncertainly on their way upwards, but a substantial built-in affair. The remarkable thing about it is its speed. I timed it once for the round journey from the fourth floor to the ground and back again to the fourth. Four minutes forty-seven seconds, and not an instant wasted by the attendant in loading. It is one of the few lifts that I have ever encountered in which it is practically impossible to tell when you start.

I have also found what I am told is the oldest working lift in Prague. It serves an elderly block of flats. True, it is automatic, but what distinguished

it from the moderns is, first, that it is what you might call a homing lift. As soon as you reach your destination and close the door behind you the lift returns to its base, the ground floor, and all your tears, and anything else, will not summon it back. It is exclusive too. Its door can be opened only by those in possession of the pass key, who are of course only to be found among the tenants. Visitors to the block must walk up as well as down. Of course you can quite see the arguments in favour of that.

But the lift that worries me most is the one in the Ministry of Foreign Trade. The Ministry lives in a building that was once a private bank and later the Gestapo H.Q., but the lift has the air of having been designed for an amusement park. There are two shafts, one containing an infinite series of lifts, one on top of the other, going up, the other a similar series of lifts for ever going down. There are no gates. For those with strong nerves, the plan is to spring lightly on to the floor of a moving lift as it comes level with the solid ground on which you are standing and, contrariwise, to spring out again when your destination is reached. Those without strong nerves should use the staircase, for the penalties of failure are considerable. Step out too soon and your foot may be jammed between the floor of the lift and the lip of the floor you are approaching. Jump out too late—but there is no need to describe that. The lift-shaft must often have run red with blood.

But the riddle I have yet to solve is what happens to the ascending column of lifts when they reach the top floor, and, of course, what happens to those going down in the basement. Do the lifts in one shaft in some way get transferred to the other shaft, or does each column make a separate return journey upside down? Even on the top floor you can't see what happens. One morning I left a piece of paper in an ascending lift and waited fifteen minutes to see if it came down in the other shaft. It did not.

Of course some tidy clerk may have picked it up.

Then at night—do the lifts go on continuously or do they stop, and, if so, how do you get out if you are midway between two floors? Are whistles blown to warn you of zero hour? But, if so, what happens to ignorant foreigners like me (of whom the Ministry of Foreign Trade may contain

quite a number) who would put any whistle-blowing down to some obscure Czech custom, one that could not possibly have any personal application? Even a warning shout, in Czech, would only leave me puzzled but not apprehensive.

Of course there are many other mysteries about foreign trade in Czechoslovakia, but I should like to solve at least this one.

Then there are the lifts that appear suddenly out of pavements in the main streets— But that is enough. They should be classified as Hazards-Pedestrian, not Hazards-Vertical.

## Lucus a Non Lucendo

**E**ACH beech  
in the wood  
bursts at the same  
time in ten thousand  
tongues of flame,  
but though these spurts  
of fire lick  
branch and twig,  
just in the nick  
of time  
each beech-tree  
seems to be  
turned to a fountain  
not a tree  
on fire to its finger-tips.

Yet beeches are but farthing-dips  
to chestnut trees  
which, one by one,  
light their candles  
from the sun  
and, burning into  
sweetness, share  
their light and scent  
with the gold air  
and, blazing from  
each separate wick  
of every seven-spiked  
candlestick,  
blaze away  
through noon and night  
and, as their scent fades  
wax more bright.

O Ministry of Fuel and Power,  
could you not harness, for one hour,  
this shameful waste of heat and light?

R. C. S.

## Here and There with Mr. Bevin

"Mr. Bevin has his face still turned towards the past but the pressure of circumstances impels him from time to time to look back, thus giving him a glimpse of the present and the future, which he appreciates only imperfectly."—*Indian paper*.



### Slingsby's Patron

I HAD not seen Slingsby for over five years, but he did not seem to have changed much.

"Got any gin?" he asked.

"Not much," I said.

"Then give us a swig and hide the bottle," he said. "Porridge is coming round. You know, J. K. Porridge. He wants to meet you."

"Is he a very heavy drinker?"

"J. K.? Good heavens, no!" cried Slingsby. "Never touches the stuff. Hey, not too much water."

"Doesn't he like other people drinking?" I asked. I had been overseas a long time and I could not quite remember who J. K. Porridge was.

"Oh, no. J. K.'s broad-minded enough," said Slingsby. "But he's very sensitive to atmosphere and I'm giving myself a bit of a build-up. There's some talk of the F.P.O.I. people making a documentary film of J. K.'s last book, *Austerity Pays*, and I rather saw myself writing the script. Some more gin, please."

"What does F.P.O.I. stand for?"

"To tell you the truth," Slingsby admitted, "I can't remember. But Hilary Bude's got something to do with it. They're a very forward-looking lot."

The bell rang and Slingsby went to the door. I got a bottle of whisky out of the cupboard and put it beside the gin. Slingsby, returning, looked at me in a marked manner.

He had with him a square, worried-looking man in spectacles, with a small amount of soup on his cardigan. This man looked at me in rather a piercing sort of way and said he had heard a lot about me. I said I had heard a lot about him and offered him a drink. He refused, rather in the manner of Sir Stafford Cripps repelling the

advances of a nautch-girl. Slingsby had to refuse too. I helped myself to a whisky and soda and we all sat down.

"How did the meeting go, J. K.?" asked Slingsby.

"Which meeting?"

Slingsby wore that look of candour which always comes over his face when he is bluffing. Something told me that many of J. K.'s waking hours were spent at meetings.

"I can't remember whether you were speaking or taking the chair," Slingsby prevaricated. "I know I tried to come, but—"

"Oh you mean the 'Legacy of Chaos' discussion," said Porridge, looking a shade less severe. "It was most stimulating. Not many people there—the fine weather was against us—but there was some first-rate speaking. And a thoroughly international forum."

"What conclusions did you reach?" I asked.

"No formal resolutions were passed," replied Porridge, "but there was no mistaking the general sense of the meeting. I doubt if there was anybody who didn't come away convinced that Britain's world-status had never been lower." For a moment he looked almost happy.

"That's a point I'm always trying to bring out," said Slingsby; but from his abstracted tone of voice I knew that what he was trying to do at the moment was to devise a stratagem for getting a drink without J. K. noticing.

"I think you'd have been interested," continued Porridge, looking at me sternly. "We had a remarkable diversity of evidence. First an American spoke on British misrule in India, then a man who'd worked for

the Rumanian underground tore our Balkan policy to shreds. Then there was a Siamese girl—quite a brilliant little creature who's lived in Switzerland all her life—who produced an amazing indictment of the mess we're making in South-East Asia, and a very objective young Jew pointed out how our double-dealing in Palestine had undermined the whole British position in the Middle East. A corporal in the Royal Army Pay Corps forecast wholesale mutinies in the Army before the end of the year (mostly the fault of the Brigade of Guards, I gathered), Fudge the economist explained why national bankruptcy was inevitable, and a very thoughtful Ukrainian summed up our position rather neatly by saying 'In her own eyes Great Britain is a third-rate Power, but in the eyes of the world she ranks much lower.' That's the sort of fearless speaking we need in these days. Don't you agree?"

"I suppose it is," I said weakly. "I hadn't realized things were quite so bad."

"Bad!" cried Porridge. "Our position has never been weaker or more equivocal." He looked so pleased that he seemed almost human.

"I suppose there's nothing much you can do about it?" I asked. "Except get the Opposition to kick up a fuss in the House?"

J. K. looked genuinely shocked. "The Opposition! Do you seriously suggest that we should encourage those backbiting reactionaries to embarrass the Government? My dear fellow, don't you realize that it's only the prestige of Socialism that's keeping our heads above water and holding the Empire together?"

"But I thought you said—"

J. K. Porridge had risen and was looking at his watch. I had very strongly the impression that he was disappointed in me.

"I'm afraid you're a bit out of touch with political realities," he said, "but I'm glad we've had this talk. Now I must go. I've a meeting at seven o'clock. You're coming, aren't you, Slingsby?"

Slingsby, who had been eyeing the drinks with a fond and hopeful expression, started violently.

"Which meeting is that?" he asked, with a trace of petulance.

"It's the Appeals Committee of the 'Abolish Compulsory Saluting Campaign,'" snapped Porridge. "Didn't you get a notice?"

"No," lied Slingsby, "and" as a matter of fact—

"Never mind," said Porridge firmly. "You come along with me now and we'll see the secretary doesn't overlook you again."

"Very well," said Slingsby; but I

saw him discreetly hide his large black hat under his chair.

As I showed them out I restored this hat to Slingsby.

"Lucky I noticed it," I said, "otherwise you'd have got half-way to the meeting and then had to come back for it."

"Oh, thanks," snarled Slingsby: adding, under his breath, "You'll pay for this."

I dare say I shall, too. P. F.

## Spanners in My Stanzas

"SOMETHING pastoral, please, that the Colonel can recite after the Girl Guides are in place and before the Men of England have burst out from behind the Women's Institute," says Miss Chuffley-Startup, backing through the gate.

"How are you dressing the Colonel?" I ask desperately.

"He's dressing himself," she replies. "I mean, we're leaving it to him."

"But what line do you want me to take?" I demand miserably. "Phosphately agricultural or——" Miss Chuffley-Startup, being a born organizer, has already gone.

I am therefore left to give birth to a poem, and heavy travail lies ahead. The first thing is to jettison from the mind all material dross, as a preliminary to tuning the delicate receiving-set the possession of which divides us poets from the truck-drivers and stockbrokers. I am jettisoning like anything when I am brusquely informed that the man has come about the immersion-heater and how about lagging? This is where the poet with a mountain-cave above funicular-level has it over us others who try to combine things with wearing ties and having hot baths. I make the special face signifying I am in inviolable purdah and begin jettisoning the man who has come about the immersion-heater. I settle on the lawn in my personal deck-chair which flies a scarlet pennant to announce that I am out of bounds.

A noble blankness now descends on me, at one with nature, and I await with lively anticipation the rumbling buzz in the lower compartment of the aura which will presage the lyric in-pouring. Ah!

At evening, through innumerable beetled sedge

The greater whitethroat bellows fitfully to its mate,

This will knock them for six!

*The wireworm takes its nuptial flight among the veg,*

There is a small boy leaning over the gate making horrible noises. Why we squander public money in this part of the country on the education of small boys I cannot guess, for their communication grows daily more zoological. This one, whose voice has a working-range of about five miles, is trying to ask would we like an extra pint? I make a gesture in the thirsty affirmative and jettison the small boy, but he may have done serious damage.

*And lactic juices off the record flood my plate.*

I feared as much. Over-sensitive as always. This is not quite in the Colonel's genre, but I cannot tamper with pure inspiration. It is not always understood that we poets receive our finest work direct from the ether, and that only poetasters indulge in the squalid mosaic of composition.

*Low in the rumped sky the hornet comes apace,*

Ah, back on course again!

*Nor do the cidrous blossoms stand aloof or still,*

I doubt if I have ever done better. A small bird is practising slow rolls over the heath. I dare say it is a lark. It makes in any case an excellent point of concentration and I fix it in a white-hot gaze. The whole business is agony to me, but I don't think it does much damage to the bird.

*For tiny zephyrs lightly dodge from place to place——*

"What beautiful wallflowers, if I may so!"

It is an elderly lady that now leans over the gate. She looks comely, but what I have the honour to be engaged

on is for the good of all and not simply for one old lady. I therefore make the face I have hitherto reserved for clearing the bank of too-curious bullocks when I am fishing. It works, but I tremble for what she has done.

*Sad aunts in purple toques are left to pay the bill.*

I knew it. Although these verses are gathering a beautiful strength of their own they are less and less up the Colonel's rather restricted boulevard. The sun has come out and as a corrective I will try baring my torso to it. My east wing had it yesterday, my west shall toast to-day. The relationship between ultra-violet and the higher poesy is something yet to be properly documented. But Walter Scott knew about it—"The vernal sun new life bestows, Even on the meanest flower that blows"—and if it does all that to the meanest flower it is hard to say what it may not do to an open-handed one like me.

*The velvet-tinctured rills which course toward the sea*

Simple, but manly.

*Reflect the empyrean fires as west robs south.*

Exquisite. I knew the orb would win through.

*And all the lush, ecstatic countryside is free——*

There is a sickening commotion out in the lane. Christmas's infernal heifers, bow to stern in an idiot wedge, trumpeting like doomed mammoths. My ivory tower is beef-shattered. All may be lost.

*To taste the bitter, special joys of foot-and-mouth.*

It is. I am going indoors to write a measured protest to the local paper about a leak in the water-rate. ERIC.







"Wot, stewed squirrel again?"

## India

(To Young XY, demobbed from there—who didn't like it.)

**L**ONG, long ago when it seems, looking back from to-day,  
I was very, very young,  
A country took me, foreign and far away,  
Speaking an alien tongue,  
Where the sounds and the sights  
And the days and the nights  
And the seasons were new and strange as the folk I was  
cast among.

And yet from the first we were friends; on the earliest eve  
When a sun went down on Madras  
In a blazoned glory a fellow could scarce believe  
On a river of rainbow glass  
With the salt sea-breeze  
Through the toddy-trees,  
I said "I'll be happy here"; and so did it come to pass.

Now home you come, young friend, and a tale you tell  
Of a land that was wholly bad—  
Unrelievedly ugly and hot as hell  
And dreary to drive you mad;  
And you thank your stars  
You have broken the bars  
Of a prison you'd no good word for—not a good word  
you had.

But I can remember palm-trees under the moon  
With the jasmine thick on the air;  
I can remember the jungle afternoon  
And the sun-shot silence there;

And the saraband  
Of the surf on the sand . . .  
Had you nothing of these, unfortunate boy, to lighten  
your dark despair?

I can remember palace and fort and shrine  
Where the storied ages lie;  
And the temple bells and the temple lamps a-shine  
And the thunder that split the sky  
When the conches blew  
To the drums' tattoo  
And borne aloft by a multitude the gilded gods went by.

I can remember one and a thousand things—  
New stars blue-diamond bright,  
The koil's song and the butterflies' jewelled wings  
And the egrets snowy-white  
Against the sheen  
Of the paddy-green . . .  
Saw you no solace in these, young sir, no inkling of delight?

Nothing worth seeing in India, I think you said,  
Nothing at all to do . . .  
How has the beauty, how has the wonder fled  
From the magic land I knew?  
What is the truth,  
Unhappy youth—  
Was I all wrong about it, or—this is a thought—are you?  
H. B.

## Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

XXVI

**A**S he came in one evening Amos heard somebody use  
the word "inimitable," and that started him off.  
Glowing at the man he repeated "Inimitable!  
Do you realize what you're saying?"

"I'll buy it," replied the man with a cheerfulness that  
Amos appeared to find offensive. "What am I saying?"  
Amos sat down heavily and took off his hat and puffed,  
and a drink was passed from hand to hand until it reached  
him. Then he announced portentously "You are saying  
nothing whatever. You are employing a totally meaning-  
less word."

There were protests and some little argument for two or  
three minutes. Then Amos said "Look. If he's *inimitable*,  
I take it his style is very distinctive?"

"You might say that—yes."

"Well, then," said Amos triumphantly, leaning back.  
"No very distinctive style is inimitable. The more dis-  
tinctive, the more imitable. You just can't have it both  
ways. In that kind of connection, 'inimitable' is a  
meaningless word."

Much to our annoyance we couldn't think of any quick  
reply to this, and there was a flat silence while Amos  
looked complacent and the rest of us brooded. In the  
middle of it arrived a man who said "Good lord, what's  
up with you all?"

Amos said, "I have been attending to their education,"  
but he didn't look any too pleased when somebody added  
"In his inimitable manner."

\* \* \* \* \*  
"He's a liverish blighter," said Amos of a man it would  
be as well for me not to name. "And he won't sign  
anything."



"I'm afraid there's nothing for you, Z4, unless, of course, you hold a science degree."

"Won't sign anything?"

"No. My belief," said Amos, "is that he has so many spots before the eyes that he can't trust himself to pick out the dotted line."

"... but if there's one kind of novel I shall *not* be found writing," he said suddenly without any preface, "it is a *humorous novel*."

He loaded these last words with a formidable weight of disgust, and added "Ugh!" in case we should not have noticed it.

"Mind you," he went on, "I don't necessarily object to all novels that might be literally described as humorous. I simply mean the book that conforms to the publisher's trade term 'humorous novel.' Broadly, it means one of two things." He cleared his throat. "One is the imitation early-Wodehouse: the big young man usually called Bill, the capable grey-eyed young woman, and his difficulties with some raffish friend. Still being written by all kinds of people, but the period always seems about 1922. The other is the story about the Little Man, in his well-known bowler hat, throughout referred to as *Mister So-and-So*—I mean the *man*," he suddenly snarled, with a dirty look at a simple soul who had seemed about to break in with a sunny joke, "who is caught up in a whirl of some kind. Either of these, but usually the second, may be modified by a plot depending on some purely mechanical device, such as an invention or a discovery that overcomes or reverses some natural law like gravity or the widespread inability to read other people's thoughts..." He reflected, and then said "Yes, if there's one kind of novel I shall *never* be found writing it is that."

Somebody said "Why, Amos, I don't believe you were ever found writing anything at all."

Unexpectedly he seemed quite pleased at this. "I do keep it pretty dark, don't I?" he said with innocent pride.

"As a matter of fact I'm toying with the hope that years hence some earnest chumps will build up an enormous pile of evidence that all my stuff was written by someone else, a pile that will eventually be demolished in a moment by some simple find... That's why I regard Baconians with such an indulgent eye, you know: every time I see one I think of the stupendous cropper they will all come sooner or later, when some perfectly ordinary fact comes to light on the other side and all their industriously-calculated cryptograms collapse. Where on earth will their mathematical cravings find satisfaction then? Astrology, I suppose."

He looked at us all hopefully, breathing hard. But there didn't seem to be a Baconian, or an astrologer, or even a humorous novelist present.

"Exclusiveness," he said once, late in the evening, "is entirely a matter of relativity, though founders of would-be exclusive clubs perennially forget it. The most rigid and painstaking methods of selection don't prevent practically every club from being supplied with all the well-known club nuisances, from the Bore downwards."

Then he looked at the clock, finished his drink, stood up, said with calm effrontery "Why, even in our own little circle here—" and went out.

R. M.

## Things Alone

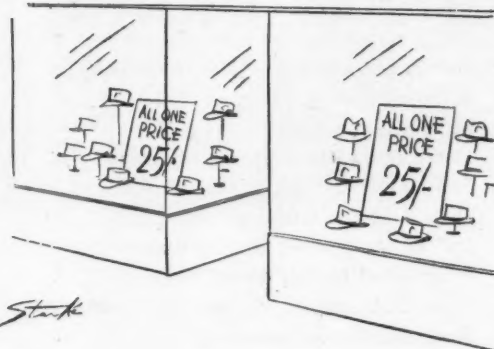
XXV

A LONG once met a short  
and said "You are the sort  
to make the average come true.  
That goes for me as well as you."

XXVI

The gloom said to the light  
"You don't seem very bright."  
Said the light to the gloom  
"You'd better leave the room."

Bigg's  
FAMOUS 7'6 HATS





*"I think, Charles dear, you'll find everything just as you left it."*

### Spring Song

**T**WO frogs, of which I'm very fond,  
Are croaking sadly in the pond.  
Though all about them whispers  
"Spring!"  
It does not seem to mean a thing.  
In vain the duck-weed slowly spreads  
Cool camouflage above their heads;  
And in the star-wort's leaves are hung  
A thousand cradles for their young.  
In vain the water-lilies climb  
Their graceful way to summer-time.  
Still unconsoled, my old friends poke  
Their cold wet noses out and croak;  
And all the garden, glowing round,  
Is darkened by the dismal sound.  
When I observe, as Wordsworth would,  
That daffodils are rather good,

Or when I note, with childish glee,  
New buds upon our apple-tree,  
It brings my lifting spirit down,  
The saddest song in London Town.  
The Spring, with all its happy hum,  
Is but a mockery for some.  
They make this odd insistent noise,  
I think, because they both are boys.  
We had a lady-frog. It died  
Of famine, frost or suicide.  
At all events, one no more sees  
A cloud of tadpoles at their knees.  
O friends—if any friends remain—  
You will not leave my pets in pain!  
O foes, whatever I did wrong,  
Forget it, and attend my song!  
Go, seek in all the swamps and bogs,  
And bring me, quick, two lady-frogs. A. P. H.





THE LOAN TRAIL

## This Week's English Exercise

**MIXED DOUBLES**  
**R**EARRANGE these people into their correct pairs:

Master	Maid
Husband	Mistress
Butler	Wife

### WHODUNIT?

Select the correct occupations followed by these people:

1. One who builds houses (conjuror, magician, Civil Servant).
2. One who is browned off (sun-bather, soldier, civilian).
3. Lady who wears real silk stockings (no lady, lucky cat, swankpot).

### CORRECT USE OF WORDS

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

1. — a — makes —.
2. The — the —, all the world over.
3. Witness said the accused called him a —, and said he ought to be — ashamed of himself.

### PURPLE PATCHES

What is meant by:

1. Deep Purple
2. Gentian Violet
3. Royal Blue Washable

### THREADBARE PHRASES

Do not attempt more than four questions:

1. How right is a trivet?
2. How green was my valley?
3. How near is a Scotsman?

### SPELING

Which of these words is speled wrong:  
 ring rang rung wrong

### SCHOOL-BOY HOWLERS

What is wrong in the following sentences:

1. The girl walked quickly past the hat shop.
2. The foreman, a nice, kind man, worked twice as hard as anyone in his gang.
3. The soldiers were blessing their sergeant-major.

## National Health and the Hospital

*Auchterbrose Scotland*  
*Friday*  
*(To Mr Spout M P.)*

**D**EAR Sir This is Mrs Dusty Mrs Pilkie and Mrs McSumph writing and it is about the political state of affairs here which you was asking about. But mind you Mr Spout M P there is certain ones making a noise to do away with politics altogether. Mr McFlannel is trying to get a meeting to make up a non party party to abolish politics. But Willie Flesh the butcher says if they do he will get up a non non party party. Whatever that means. But for to let you understand Willie and Mr Flannel could never agree about anything let alone abolishing politics. But Dr Pills says nothing is no use because politics is incurable.

Mrs Blunderbags is another against politics. Though she is always one thing or another. She says we was to tell you it was a black burning shame to be carrying on about budgets and trade unions in the very middle of the spring cleaning.

Now about the national health which you was wanting to hear. Well some is this and some is that and opinions

is very mixed. Jock McSparrow says it is just the healthy ones paying for the diseased ones. Twelve pound the year says he I am to be out of pocket for free doctors that never cost me a penny when I had to pay for them. Says Jock the laird gets his ribs broke at the hunting and it is me that has to pay. And him could get every bone he has broke and never feel it.

Old Davy Stodge said he has to pay for ten years before he gets the big pension. Me eighty two says he. It will take a hell of a lot of free medicine his very words Mr Spout M P to keep me alive.

But Mrs String says she will vote for national health because it is high time Dr Pills was put in control. Manys the time says she have I been at deaths door and him away at a football match and my bad nights he is always at the masons. National health is badly wanted says she for bringing these ones under regular hours for the needs of invalids.

Not mentioning no names you will mind the woman that lives in the wee thatched house with constant indigestion so she says. She was the one that told you it was easy for you to talk that had not got a stomach. Well

Mrs Pilkie asked her the other day how her stomach was. And she looked kind of important at Mrs Pilkie and says she it is getting taken over by the government noo.

But Mr Spout M P the worst opinions of the lot is about the Cleugh Hospital. The government wanting to take the whole lock stock and barrel for theirselves. We are all signing a petition that is to be sent to you. And some is talking about getting up a procession. Old Mrs Slatts says she is ready to walk to London even with her corns. The deaf and dumb lady the sister of the lairds wife is going up and down the street working her fingers to the bone. In her way of talking you understand. You have no idea Mr Spout M P the rumpuses. And Maggie Blunderbags comes in here again. No further gone than last night she let off a regular speech in Mrs Dustys kitchen. She said does yon Bevan think he is going to get his hands on the three thousand pound we gathered in with years of sweating and cutting our lifes short getting up whist drives. And rumpuses at every one of them and everybody resigning the committee every time. Not on your life says she. Sets of sheets and blankets have I made donations of for the hospital. And is it only for to hand over to yon Bevan that is fat enough to keep hisself warm without them. We told her the fat one was the other one. But that just made her wilder. And thats another thing says she. Two Bevanses and none of them would have been too much. And we hate if we are hurting your feelings Mr Spout M P but it is only fair to tell you. She said you was a poulitice.

We are real sorry Mr Spout M P if all this about the hospital will upset you but truth will tell

Yours most respectful

MARTHA DUSTY (Mrs)

MARY PILKIE (Mrs)

HELEN MCSUMPH (Mrs)

P S Word has just come through that Mr McHoolish the minister says the petition will have to be held back for looking into. It appears there is more names on it than there is folk in the place. But it shows you Mr Spout M P the state of the feelings the folks is in here. D.

### Forgotten Sports

"In Opladen, between Dusseldorf and Cologne, the river Wupper burst its banks and parts of the town were flooded to a depth of three feet. Five thousand sand bags were sent to breach the seal."

"British Zone Review."



"Can't get a quiet pint nowadays without a lot of highbrows spouting poetry at you."

### Not as Bad as all That

ONE of the many little signs that things are beginning to get back to normal is the gradually returning brownness of the retail loaf. Colour is coming back into our lives and for some of us, rendered almost albino by the long troglodyte years, it is rather puzzling and a little painful.

The "85 p.c. extraction loaf" (whatever that may mean—I am merely quoting one of the great daily journals) is difficult to describe. The particular hue is not quite a Vandyke and not warm enough perhaps for Burnt Sienna; the closest parallel would be the bark of the common larch in late autumn—or the bloom on the *sucase* fruit of Bulgaria. An exquisite colour, if you can accustom your eyes to it slowly.

Most people have failed to adapt themselves to the new loaf as readily as was hoped. They seem unprepared, as it were, psychologically and would have preferred the old white loaf to remain just a little longer. And it is with these unfortunates in mind that I have drafted this article. I can help

you to bleach your bread to your entire satisfaction, and without any expensive equipment or palaver.

Any intelligent housewife can give her bread a sparkling dazzling whiteness and become the envy of her friends by following these simple rules. When next you serve bread see that your tablecloth (your backcloth, that is) is soiled consistently throughout. To do this wash it carefully in a solution of old snow or any good substitute. See, too, that your crockery is toned to match the cloth. Any good *hôte* will tell you how this is done. Hands present less difficulty, but once again let me stress the importance of all-over discoloration. Children love it.

You are about to serve the bread. The moment supreme has arrived. The ordinary lighting unit has been replaced by a 15-watt bulb and the table wears an attractively sombre air. Suddenly the door is kicked open and you appear carrying aloft an off-white platter with a fine steaming loaf. Father carves and the family fall with

relish upon the seemingly chalk-white viand.

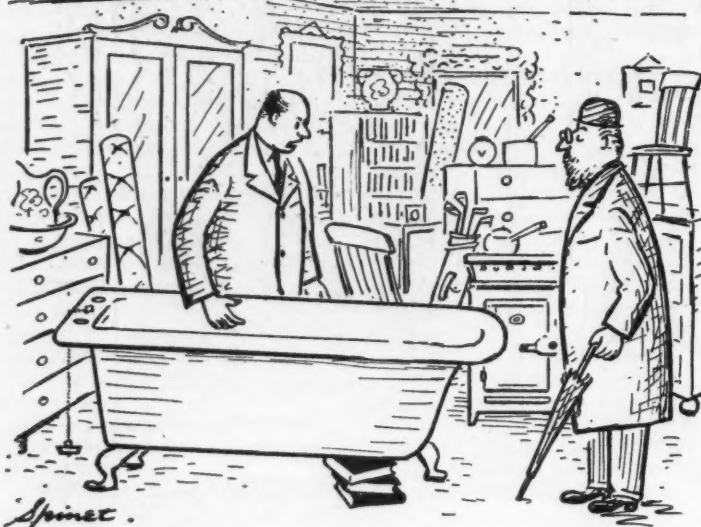
The meal I have just described is very simple to prepare. It consists of an ordinary household loaf (garnished with bread crumbs) which has been popped into a slow oven for four minutes. Sensitive carving makes or mars the dish. Try shaping the bread into interesting shapes such as diamonds, fish, regular pentagons, chops or sausages, and add seasoning to taste. A few other recipes are appended.

**Minc'd Loaf.** Take a loaf and make a small hole in its side with a skewer. Fix a cup beneath the hole to catch escaping juices. Then take a cycle-pump, fix the nozzle in the hole and inflate the loaf to at least three times its normal size. Eat smartly.

**Shepherd's Crust.** Take a loaf and cut away one side, unless this has already been done by the Government. Then scoop out bread until only crust remains and fill with water. Bring to the boil, throw in loose bread and serve as only mother can. Hod.



## SECOND-HAND FURNITURE



"All right, then, have it your way—15/- for volumes 2, 5 and 7 of Macaulay's History of England—and a bath."

## Rural Report

"Mopse"

**S**PLIT the village it has which just shows how much strife one fool can make and all because of a dog.

Mopse was left behind by a Dutch airman who made a few friends in the village and if the name isn't spelt right that's how it sounded. He's one of them big sad dogs who eat, drink, stroll a few yards and go to sleep. He's that big there isn't a kennel in the village he can get in, and not a room where he wouldn't wreck the furniture inside ten minutes, so because nobody would own him we had a whip-round at the Bull to pay for his licence and he's what you might call common property.

Lily the barmaid took out the licence and that Stiggins says she's liable.

Stiggins is quite a fool. He's a foreigner who started farming Cold Acres soon after the other war and whenever he comes into the village you may depend there's trouble brewing.

He came in one evening a week ago, flashing free drinks about and trying

to get a few extra hands for haying. Well, we chipped him a bit, I dare say, and when he went out he was in a bit of a temper. Old Mopse was in his usual place, asleep at the bottom of the door-step. Stiggins fell over him and the dog, natural-like, woke up, bit him and went to sleep again.

Stiggins let out a howl like he'd been murdered and came bolting back through the other door. You never heard such a fuss as that man made. We tied him up and old Munger started telling him about an uncle of his who got hydrophobia, when Stiggins suddenly dashes out again. Old Mopse, who's got more sense than any foreigner even if he was Dutch when he first came to the village, had shifted. He'd got more sense than stick on a step where people fell over him, so he'd gone to the other door. Stiggins didn't see him. He fell over the poor old dog, who turned round and bit him and curled up again.

What must Stiggins do but rush off home, load up his twelve-bore and come back after closing-time. He let

one barrel go at something dark on the door-step and blew a hole through the mat Lily had chucked out for shaking. Some of the shots broke the glass of the door and Lily let out such a screech that it scared the whole village. There hasn't been such a bolting and barring since the night when Munger misheard his wireless and told everybody parachutists had been dropped down the creek. Stiggins bolted for home, thinking he'd shot somebody. Anybody but a born fool would have known that any dog would have been making inquiries. He fell over old Mopse. And the dog didn't even growl. He just bit Stiggins and went back to his bed at the side door.

Joe Harris, our policeman, had been in the Bull and was almost home when he heard the shots. He said afterwards that he had to go and get into uniform. That's as may be. But he'd have saved himself trouble if he'd stopped that Stiggins, who went straight home, tied on some more bandages, reloaded and came back. We could hear him going, every step of the way, and so could Mopse.

Shows what a fool the man was. He might have known that any dog would be interested in such goings-on. There's a darkish place under some yew-trees at the end of the street. Stiggins came creeping back along there, determined to shoot that poor dog. Just under the biggest tree he fell right over Mopse, who bit him and slipped off out of the way. We reckon he was getting sick and tired of the taste of Stiggins. He went back to the Bull and curled up at the front door.

Stiggins was real mad by this time. He took a short cut, saw something move in the dark and let drive with both barrels. He got old Munger's sow, just with a few shots that didn't do more than make her holler. But she's better at ear-piercing than any animal we've ever had. She broke her own record for volume, went straight through the fence and in front of Joe Harris as he was cycling off full pelt to get help from the next village.

That was the noisiest night we've had since Mackay's two boys came back from Mafeking and busted the old man's bagpipes. In the end, those of us who'd been under cover because we'd been locked out when the bolting and barring started went back to the Bull. The Law was shook up so that he overlooked the licensing laws. Stiggins was in need of attention, too. Real bad, he looked, but after he'd had a couple of drinks and we'd tied him up some more, he felt well enough to go home. Joe Harris made him leave his gun behind and said we'd best

shake hands all round. That started an argument, but we did it, and Stiggins went out.

He fell over Mopse. The poor old dog didn't even get up, or growl or anything. He just bit Stiggins and went to sleep again.

Yes, it's split the village. Some of them who don't use the Bull or don't like dogs are backing up Stiggins, but most of us say you can't blame a poor dumb animal. If he wants to shoot old Mopse he'll have to wait till next year. We clubbed together for that licence and we want our money's worth. And we're getting it.

## Shoes

ARMY life inevitably left its mark upon the characters and habits of even the most phlegmatic of us, and its main effect on me was to turn me from a one-pair-of-shoes man to an eight-pairs-of-shoes man. Before the war I owned only one good pair of shoes, and I had a special arrangement with the cobbler to mend them in a few hours when they got more than usually down-at-heel, during which time I wore an old pair of top boots that I acquired as the first step towards the purchase of a steam yacht, a purchase which, for various reasons, I never made.

It was the Middle East that turned me into an eight-pairs-of-shoes man. All officers wore brown shoes in the Middle East, and there was a rule that you could buy a pair from the N.A.A.F.I. only every six months. I cannot say whether it was actually compulsory to buy a pair of brown shoes every six months, but I never risked playing fast-and-loose with Middle East General Orders, so I gradually acquired a very handsome stock of seven pairs of brown shoes.

Five pairs came to me in this way, and I obtained the sixth pair in East Africa when I flew down there and got my feet wet in a swamp. Then when I was demobilized the Government kindly presented me with my seventh pair, and all fourteen shoes now stand on parade on the bottom shelf of my wardrobe.

To most people I suppose they would be just shoes, but to me each pair has a personality of its own, and I have named them after the places where they were bought. The Durban shoes are beginning to show signs of age, and could, I think, be worn in the garden if I had not too much respect for them. The Cairo pair I can always recognize

by a peculiar dent in the left toe-cap due to my stubbing my foot against the Sphinx in running to avoid a holy man who was after me for baksheesh.

The Alexandria shoes are of a curious whitish-brown colour owing to the fact that Driver Obongo sold me for an enormous sum a large tin of what falsely purported to be brown boot polish, and then insisted on cleaning my shoes with it, although it had only the effect of making them go paler and paler. The Jerusalem shoes are chiefly remarkable for being a size too small and remind me painfully of the only day on which I wore them, at a sports meeting at Gaza, when the Brigadier bullied me into running in an "over thirty" race. Nobody would believe that it was the shoes that made me come in last, and I have disliked them ever since.

The Damascus shoes are disfigured by what appears to be an acid-stain, but is really caused by a drop of a peculiarly ferocious brand of local alcohol which I used to drink with a Lebanese friend. I gave up local alcohol after seeing its effect on my shoe.

The Nairobi shoes are, perhaps my favourites. The coloured servant in Blore's Hotel in Nairobi must have been the world's champion shoe-polisher, and he gave them an initial polish that brought them to a fine mellow shade I have seldom seen equalled. They are such a lovely pair of shoes that I could not bear to wear

them for common purposes, and when I die I shall present them to the nation.

The last pair, my "demob" shoes, have never yet been worn, but they have a rakish devil-may-care air in tune with my mood on the Great Day.

Alas! The dust is gathering on all seven pairs of brown shoes, because I made a fatal error on that same day. I chose a curious blue and red confection for my "demob" suit, and Edith says that brown shoes do not "go" with it, whatever that may mean. I might have worn my brown shoes in strict rotation with my pre-war heather-mixture suit or my flannel trousers and sports jacket, but these proved to have been eaten by moths, so the brown shoes will have to wait until 1947, when the tailor hopes to have my new suit finished.

So the only shoes I can wear are my pre-war black ones, and I am trying very hard, but so far without success, to find a cobbler who will mend them in a few hours when they become seriously down-at-heel.

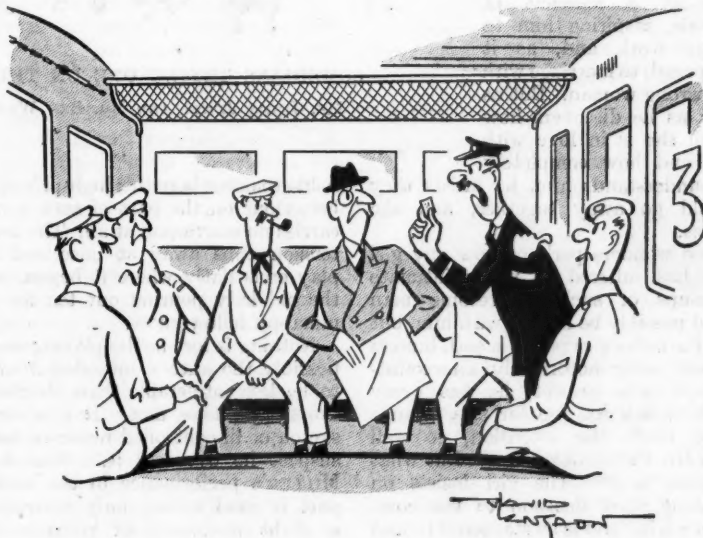
"CONFECTIONERS TO FIGHT"

Headline in "Commercial Motor."

With custard-pies of course.

Impending Apology

"When he is making a picture, James Mason often stays at the Savoy. It is hard work."—Weekly paper.



"Come on out! There's bags of first-class seats up in front of the train."

## At the Play

"THE LONG MIRROR"  
(NEW LINDSEY THEATRE CLUB)

THE time-space idea continues to attract Mr. PRIESTLEY, who has gone to it once more for a plot which basically is interesting though in human terms unsatisfactorily worked out. The scene of this latest experiment is a haunted, remote little Welsh hotel. Its guests are an old lady and a hag-ridden girl who makes the astonishing admission that she is a party to every thought and feeling, past and present, of a well-known composer whom she has never met. Knowing he is coming to the hotel she has decided to come too in a desperate attempt to resolve her unhappy plight. The composer arrives alone, an arrogant neurotic, and, discovering the girl's secret, is holding her in his arms when his wife walks in.

Composer and wife having tried unsuccessfully to patch up their marriage, which is the purpose for which they have met, he and the girl then discuss the fantastic link that binds them. He has been ignorant of it, not realizing that hers was the face which had appeared to him at a moment of despair, inspiring him to better work and, as it happened, to marriage with the wrong woman. But as soon as he discovers how much she is in love with him and how completely she understands him, he insists they should go away together, and she agrees.

One wonders perhaps how any girl who has suffered so many intimate close-ups of such a tiresome man could possibly be in love with him, but Mr. PRIESTLEY says she is and, human nature being notoriously unaccountable in this respect, he has every right to say so. So far this strange story holds the attention, so well does Mr. PRIESTLEY tell it. But what happens next? The girl insists on breaking their decision to the composer's wife, and is so staggered to find her distressed by it, having believed her trivial and unfeeling, that she decides not to go. This, for she is honest and generous, seems just

possible. But in the scene which follows, and which to me makes hay of the play, she has little difficulty in persuading the composer, of a sudden grown mild and tender-conscenced, into going back to his wife; their second honeymoon starting somewhat inauspiciously with a night cruise through the fog and rain of the Welsh mountains in a car which one charitably hopes contains its full ration of petrol. Whether the composer is right in thus condemning three people to what appears to be certain misery (his wife in particular having a dreadful future) is a matter for a moralist to decide; I can only say that as it is



COMEDIANS TRYING ONE ON THE DOG

MR. JIMMY JEWEL AND MR. BEN WARRISS

made to occur here this high-principled behaviour on the part of such a man carries no conviction at all. The whole tension ebbs away at once and the play ends flatly where it began, with the old lady pouring out tea for her unhappy fellow-guest.

Nothing is lost in the playing unless possibly the author intended *Michael* to be less intolerable than Mr. BASIL COLEMAN makes him. It is a clever sketch of ill-controlled neurosis, but I suspect he overdoes it. Miss JOAN MILLER's performance in the leading part is good acting, only marred by a slight monotony of voice in the lower ranges. As the unfortunate wife Miss ILONA FERENCIE is sound, Miss MARGARET SCUDAMORE gives a pleasant portrait of the type of refreshingly sane

old lady which abounds in mountain hotels, and the Welsh, for whom Itma has made life theatrically speaking very difficult, are bravely represented by Mr. HUGH PRYSE. For so creditable a production on a small stage Mr. PETER COTES deserves congratulation.

"HIGH TIME" (LONDON PALLADIUM)

Seldom can pierhead humours have been so lavishly enshrined. No glitter, no noise, and certainly no expense have been spared. A curtain curiously wrought of the polished gaskets of innumerable five-cylinder motor-cars is but the gateway to a brassy paradise in which a mechanical stage, doing everything but beg, displays, in addition to an assorted load of humans, an elephant, a pack of terriers, a cart-horse and a hen, all for the most fleeting effects, the elephant's function being merely to bring on Miss TESSIE O'SHEA. Bright and shiny dresses seem to change colour once a minute. Set after set makes one reel at the vast scope of these operations, and to complete the illusion that one has strayed into a metallurgical exhibition several miles of copper tubing pop down out of the flies. Miss O'SHEA, who plays the ukelele superbly, I must confess I find too coy in song. Mr. JIMMY JEWEL and Mr. BEN WARRISS are slick comedians, funny at their best (as musical wizards), but too often simply vulgar. The same goes for Mr. NAT JACKLEY. Mr. GIL JOHNSON is a

talented and apparently inexhaustible eccentric dancer. Having been produced by Mr. ROBERT NESBITT, the chorus is first-class. Very ordinary music is played with magnificent precision by the SKYROCKETS ORCHESTRA, but so deafeningly that when the CABANA ACCORDION SIX are on the move they are inaudible, at least in the stalls.

Smartness and showiness, in fact, have left little room either for real beauty or good taste, and the big laughs are too few and far between.

ERIC.

"White Wedding Gown, also 2 Pale Green Bridesmaids."—*Advt. in Kent paper.*

Jealousy, or champagne?



## At the Ballet

MICHAEL BENTHALL's theme for the new ballet at Covent Garden is a version of Shakespeare's philosophy of the seven ages of man, but without Shakespeare's geniality and graceful acceptance of man's "strange eventful history." In *Adam Zero* the earthly career of man is typified by that of the principal dancer in a ballet, which we see in process of creation. When the dancer's heyday is over he does not mellow and ripen, as did in real life the great dancer, teacher and mime Cecchetti. Instead, this self-centred modern "only finds peace in death."

This somewhat jejune philosophy is, however, made the occasion of a brilliant—though largely incomprehensible—spectacle and a dazzling display of stage-craft. ROBERT HELPMANN is the choreographer and ARTHUR BLISS's music is first-rate. The curtain rises on a vast darkened stage, with odd pieces of scenery propped against the walls, an upturned grand piano, a blackboard and, spotlighted in the centre of the stage, the dancer's Fates (*Designer, Wardrobe Mistress and Dresser*) all holding a red toga. Soon dancers emerge from the shadows and begin rehearsing at the barre and the Choreographer (Creator and Destroyer), in sulphur-yellow, dances a variation and ends lying on the floor. Soon scene-shifters get to work setting a scene, the lights go up and the stage fills with all kinds of characters—a bishop (Spiritual Adviser), dancers in blue tights, a cat and dog (*Character Dancers*) and a crowd of stage-hands. All kinds of strange things happen. At one moment the bishop looks like being lynched, people walk down the steps of a church that isn't there, and graceful JULIA FARRON, the hero's Atropos, dressed like an Edwardian landlady, cuts off yards of red ticker-tape at intervals from a skein she carries and hands it to him. Suddenly men appear carrying election posters inviting all and sundry to "Vote for O." While we are still wondering whether *Adam Zero* is standing for Parliament or the local council, and why, dancers appear dressed in brilliantly coloured ballet dresses. Just as one is settling down to enjoy the ballet, the lights descend from above, there is a sudden orgy of jazz, scenery crashes, flames leap up, a man appears and puts a grey wig on *Adam Zero's* head, landlady Atropos hands him some more ticker-tape, the man puts a white wig on him, and the stage empties except for *Adam Zero* and

the Choreographer (JUNE BRAE), who dances a beautiful solo with the red toga we saw at the beginning. She wraps him in it, another man who has been busily adding up plus and minus signs on the blackboard writes a large nought at the end—and we are back again with the empty stage, the odd scenery, the upturned grand piano and the three Fates in the spotlight with the red toga. The cycle is about to repeat itself.

The queer and confusing mixture of mythology and symbolism, costumes and characters in *Adam Zero* defeats its own end, fascinating though it is to watch. It merely succeeds in showing how very difficult it is to express abstract ideas in terms of the dance. One might even doubt whether it is possible to express them at all were it not for the fact that, by a strange coincidence, a completely successful solution of the problem is to be seen at the Adelphi Theatre. The ballet is *Les Forains* in the repertoire of the Ballets des Champs Elysées, with "book" by BORIS KOCHNO and choreography by ROLAND PETIT. A troupe of travelling circus performers arrive outside a town with their belongings and "props" on a hand-cart for a one-night stand. They erect their tent and practise their acts in the intervals of organizing their primitive domestic life. An audience gathers and they give their performance. There is a girl acrobat, a clown, Siamese twins and a conjurer (ROLAND PETIT) who miraculously produces bunches of flowers and a pair of doves from his sleeve. The performance over, the audience drifts away and the players repack their belongings and go wearily on their way. As the curtain falls the little girl acrobat runs back to fetch the cage of doves which has been forgotten. The setting is the simplest imaginable, but the artistry with which the idea is carried out creates, as it were by accident, that very impression of the pathos and transience of human existence which *Adam Zero*, with all its trappings, histrionics and elaborate machinery, fails to produce. The productions of this company are, however, by no means of equal merit, though the costumes and settings are unfailingly chic, and the company has very fine dancers in MILES SKORIK and SCHWARZ. *Concert de Danses*, with a charming rococo setting, suffers from weak choreography and bad Mozart. The choreography of *Jeu de Cartes*, a representation of a game of poker, is also indifferent, but this ballet is redeemed by the brilliance of STRAVINSKY's score and JEAN BABILÉE's

dancing as the *Joker*, and the colourful sophistication of the costumes and décor.

Last but not least, the Sadler's Wells Opera-Ballet has made its first bow at Sadler's Wells. The budding of this youthful company from the parent stem augurs well for the future of English ballet, for it is one more sign that a native tradition is being established. ANDRÉE HOWARD created a new ballet, *Assembly Ball*, for the new company. It is a slight but charming affair, and the choice of music is a happy one, for BIZET's Symphony in C is excellent ballet music. The performance of "Promenade" is not too satisfactory as yet, but in Act Three of "Casse Noisette" the company make a very good showing, with the help of MARGARET DALE and NORMAN THOMSON, who dance the "Sugar Plum Fairy" and the "Nut-Cracker Prince" as guest artists. The gingerbread lion, rampant upon a tower of ice-cream cornets, still turns his head biliously away from the sight of the sweets around him and looks as gloriously sick as ever. D. C. B.

## Come, Janet, Dance!

COME, Janet, dance with me, and you and I  
Will single through this changing pattern go.

How waywardly the little breezes blow,  
Then drop away, and slow  
The tumbled air resumes its place again!

Sun-flecked the chequered scene beneath us lies,  
Filled, to beguile your eyes,  
With all the quaint enchantments of surprise.  
See how the level water's silken plain  
Is patterned by the intricate, gentle rain.

Come, Janet, dance with me, and you and I  
Will yield our steps to suit the changing scene.

How fiercely green  
The young spring grass pierces the heavy soil!  
How soft the light-filled river-ripples coil

Around the stubborn stones!  
How fragmentary loveliness can be!  
Come, Janet, dance with me.



"Mummy, Susan's queueing to go out."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Shelley

MR. EDMUND BLUNDEN'S *Shelley* (COLLINS, 12/6) is a thorough and readable study, but its general effect is to iron the poet out and leave him in the end a much less enigmatic and elusive character than he is usually, with reason, supposed to have been. Shelley's expectation that his pamphlet "The Necessity of Atheism" would cause the Oxford authorities to reconsider their orthodoxy is termed by Mr. BLUNDEN "a reasonable hope . . . that in the headquarters of debate his wish to see religion logically analysed would find fair and candid disputants." The complex relations, based on a non-possessive view of marriage, between Shelley and both his first and second wife on the one hand, and his friend Jefferson Hogg on the other, are glanced at briefly and vaguely, with no attempt to show that Hogg, however unattractive his character may have been, was exposed by Shelley's insistent theorisings to a strain under which a much more scrupulous youth might have succumbed. The end of Harriet, who, it has hitherto been believed, drowned herself in the Serpentine, is involved in doubt by Mr. BLUNDEN—"The assumption that Harriet committed suicide, however probable it is, and of long standing, is an assumption." Shelley's unhappiness in Italy, the increasing tension between himself and Mary, and his love for Jane Williams, are all muffled in Mr. BLUNDEN'S narrative. One may turn to this book for a careful outline of Shelley's life, but not for a speaking likeness of a wonderful poet and an incalculable man.

H. K.

#### The Classical Mind

The trails blazed by our forefathers in their search for knowledge are more pertinent to modern inquiry than the

unclassically-educated realize. And in this connection *A History of Philosophy* (BURNS, OATES, 18/-), founded on the work of specialists but written for students, is precisely what most of us want. Father FREDERICK COPLESTON'S standpoint is scholastic; but in his endeavour to see each philosopher's thought from within and not from without he has reaped the reward of a magnanimous scholarship. The more primitive essays of Greek thought described in his book—the first volume of a series—are stiff going. But that is largely because—as with our own very similar fumbings—the questions are usually more intelligent than the answers. Better answers, in this case, are on the way; and before the author has finished with his Greeks and Romans we have seen Plato and Aristotle stake a claim for the good life founded on eternal verities, and Neo-Platonism weld religion and ethics into the synthesis that became ours with St. Augustine. The long road is vocal with tentative utterances of science, politics and art. The atom turns up in the fifth century B.C.; democracy is pronounced "the worst of all lawful governments," even before it handed the hemlock to Socrates; and the Epicureans are given a fairer deal than you would expect from a philosopher who is surprisingly tolerant of Plato's attitude towards the graces of life.

H. P. E.

#### London River

In the first sentence of her enchanting book, *Thames-side Yesterdays* (F. LEWIS, 21/-), Miss C. FOX SMITH tells how she began her hauntings of Thames-side soon after the end of the last great war, when the docks and waterside were still much as they had been in the eighteen-forties. Since Mr. E. A. Cox, whose illustrations have beauty and humour and vigour, has the riverside and docks in his blood, the book contains exactly the right mixture of old yarns and pleasant fancies, nostalgia for the past and pleasure in the present. The old Dutch eel-boats are gone, the river stairs are neglected and the Wapping public-house, once kept by Hannah Snell, has disappeared. Hannah was a female sailor who followed an absconding husband, "took the shilling" as James Gray, was wounded at Pondicherry and, after her husband was hanged, settled down at Wapping in a pub with the telling sign "The Widow in Masquerade or the Female Warrior." The book is full of stories of this sort. There is another that tells of Judge Jeffreys' capture outside the Red Cow near King Henry's Stairs. The author loves the Thames-siders, but without sentimentality, and tells how she chanced on a party of women in men's caps discussing the finding of the body of a child who had been carried away from her play by the current—"They talked of death with that mingling of familiarity and reverence one finds in sailors and in sailors' women-folk." She shows us that enough remains of old Thames-side life to make visits romantic, and adds that the scent of deal at the Surrey Docks (oldest of all) will cure a streaming cold more effectively than will a chemist's wares, so, while thanking her now for a charming book, we reserve some thanks for the winter.

B. E. B.

#### King Compost

The issue between biology and chemistry is nowhere more spectacularly joined than over agriculture, where what appears to be a new school of thought—but is really the oldest—sees in the natural interplay of soil, plant, animal and man the staple of civilization as well as of existence. For the biologist the soil has its own share of life. So one cultivates it, one does not manufacture it; and one of the most impressive and successful experiments

in such cultivation is that described by Mr. FRIEND SYKES in *Humus and the Farmer* (FABER, 12/6). The author, a celebrated breeder of bloodstock, discovered when the first tests were taken that 66 per cent. of his Friesian herd was tuberculous. He sold his Thames Valley farm, bought the worst land in Wiltshire at £4 an acre, and started farming with compost, eschewing artificial manures and concentrated foods. His methods and their results are described here in striking sequence. The former are adapted—necessarily but depressingly—to present conditions. New and costly machines for handling muck are used, and a rather inhuman collectivism is advocated, to surmount the inevitable labour troubles that attend farming under proletarian conditions. Even so, Mr. SYKES maintains that we could feed twice our population, and healthily, if every English farm took to compost.

H. P. E.

### The Cecil Rhodes Epoch

In *African Portraits* (COLLINS, 12/6) Mr. STUART CLOETE tells the history of Cecil Rhodes's struggle to found an African empire in the last decades of the nineteenth century, interweaving with Rhodes's rise and fall the story of his two chief opponents, Lobengula, the Zulu king, and Kruger, the Boer president. Mr. CLOETE has made the most of the dramatic contrast between his three heroes, the obese yet majestic Lobengula with his retinue of witch-hunters, the slow obdurate farmer-mystic, Kruger, and Rhodes, the consumptive youth who matured into an English equivalent of the modern dictator, "Spengler's new man of power," the forerunner of the Fascists, with their "politic of bringing all forces—economic, financial, geographic, and military—to bear upon an opponent and endeavour to secure gains by threats alone." Between them, these three men apparently include all the qualities admired by Mr. CLOETE—"These men were great—Rhodes, Kruger, and Lobengula towered over the other men of their time and race" and, of Rhodes and Kruger, "The virtues of both men, could they have been combined in a single individual, would have made a man who was nearly a god." Allowance made for this somewhat restricted standpoint, the reader will find Mr. CLOETE's narrative full of excitement and variety, ranging from Kruger's first lion, shot when he was fourteen, and Lobengula's order for the execution of his devoted sister, to the complicated fiasco of the Jameson raid and Kruger's last journey to Europe in search of aid as well as sympathy.

H. K.

### Strange Interlude

*Yesterday's Evening* (PETER DAVIES, 8/6) is an original novel of unusual quality, by Mr. CECIL LEWIS. Its core is a love-story which works out curiously and against all the rules of best-selling fiction; but it is much else besides, and chiefly the notebook of a philosopher and poet at pains to capture some tranquillity in an age of turbulence. Saul Caravel, an artist, has gone to Austria in 1939 in retreat from the horrors of a film-studio. He meets a young German girl, suicidally unhappy at her country's trend, who falls in love with him and follows him to Italy, where friends have commissioned him to build a house. She asks nothing but to be near him, and though they become lovers in the end their relationship is for long a delicately balanced union of mind in which Saul leads her gently from the abyss of terror and despair. Mr. LEWIS makes dramatic use of the house, mounting lastingly at the hands of a small army of eager village craftsmen, as a symbol of sanity in a mechanized world; and in Saul he explores admirably the frustrations and ecstasies of the artist.

Some may think him too frank a writer, but it is frankness always tempered by taste. The next collector to make an anthology of mountain literature should mark down the first chapter of this book, which contains the best description of ski-ing on virgin snow I have ever read.

E. O. D. K.

### Truth in Fiction

Miss ROSAMOND LEHMANN's stories have a merit that may seem hardly worth mentioning and in fact is most uncommon: they read as though they had happened. This is largely because their author accepts the human inability ever to know the whole truth—at least about people—and consequently to tell it. How admirably she turns this to account is shown in *The Gipsy's Baby* (COLLINS, 7/6), which is a very remarkable collection. The unfortunate Wyatts, for instance, with their many ailing babies and their squalor and their unexpected devotion to one another, are the kind of family that appears somewhere in the background of nearly every childhood—never exactly known yet inefaceably vivid, and persisting in the mind long after the originals, who were never in any case of conscious importance to us, passed out of our lives for ever. The Daintreys, too, strike a familiar chord—homely, well-to-do, unfashionable people, their Edwardian clothes straight out of the photograph album and their mild Edwardian expressions unaccountably associated with something actual and tragic. It is harder to explain the success of the other stories, most of them about parents and children. There are no devices, no tricks. Miss LEHMANN has simply to imagine a man taking a swarm of bees from under the roof one winter day, or children wading down a flooded road, or the shames and triumphs of a village concert, and there we are as well, sharing her imagination, seeing riches within and without through the keenest eyes in England.

J. S.



Hollowood

"No, I said the train would be sixty-five yards long WITHOUT the loco."



## Nose Towards London

I AM going to London again after all these years. The front door to England, which for me is the front door of 30 Merrion Square, Dublin, has opened a crack so that I can slip through.

Last time I was in London I went with Nancy to buy bridesmaids' dresses, mauve organdie dresses with trains and long skirts flaring from the knee. That shows you, doesn't it? I feel I may have got out of touch.

I haven't exactly got my permit yet, but it is going to be all right. First I went to the Civic Guards and told them I wanted to go to England for business reasons. The Guards looked as if they had heard something like that before. They said the people over there did not want too many going at present because they had little enough to eat themselves, but I said I really had business reasons and I was not a very big eater. The Guards asked if I had my husband's permission to travel, and I said, alas! I had no husband. The Guards passed me on to the U.K. Office in Merrion Square.

In Merrion Square I was welcomed by Mr. Attlee, smiling hugely out of an enlarged photograph. I was given a form to fill up. Then I was shown into a waiting room where there was a coal fire. Already a little bit of England!

The waiting-room was crowded with people wanting to go to England to their grandmothers' funerals. I sat down within sight of the fire and resigned myself to wait. I got out my knitting and cast on a sock. Just as I was turning the heel they called my name. I dropped everything—that is, several stitches and my ball of wool—and hurried into the presence of the authorities.

The authority I saw was very nice. He quite saw that my journey was really necessary. He has given me a letter saying that when I am given a travel permit he will give me a visa for it.

So far so good. Now I only have to obtain my birth certificate, two photographs and a five-shilling postal order. The postal order part is the most mysterious; nobody knows who gets the five shillings, but it must be a postal order, two half-crowns won't do. I take all these to the Guards and the Guards get me my permit, and then I take my permit back to the British authorities and remind them of their promise to give me a visa. It is as simple as that. By the time I have the

second sock knitted I shall be all set for London.

Now I am trying to find out what London will be like. Everybody tells me that we in Ireland cannot possibly imagine. Everything looks so shabby, they say, but I do not find it so difficult to imagine that. I think it may make the place more home-like.

They say the English are more friendly than they used to be. Strangers will talk to me in the train, because everybody has got so democratic. Shop assistants, on the other hand, will treat me like dirt.

My friends will be too busy to have much time for me. I may have some chats with them as they stand in queues. Some of them have been very kind about asking me to stay, considering they have no maids. "We are not above asking our guests to help," they write. I think this sounds ominous.

I will soften my friends' hearts towards me by bringing them presents. The only difficulty is about export licences. Will a dozen eggs, a steak, a pound of suet and an iced cake pass as provender for the journey? Can I take a bar of kitchen soap, three hot-water bottles and six lipsticks as personal luggage? It is rather a snag that I shall have to carry my own suitcase. Even if anyone should offer to carry it for me it would not be safe to let



"Quick, mother—what was it you used to give father after he'd eaten your cooking?"

them. There is this crime-wave to reckon with.

I must remember not to stop and look up at aeroplanes, nor round at soldiers in uniform. Better pretend I am used to them. I must remember that when people offer me a second helping of anything they do not really mean it. It will be nice to have tea that tastes of tea again, but I must practise saying in a convincing way that I never take sugar or milk.

I wonder what about clothes? It would of course be doing the right thing by Britain to buy one of those designed-for-export models, which cost, I believe, from fifty guineas. But one does not want to look too well-dressed. Even my coat and skirt, out of which I only shake the moth balls on great occasions, is rather new-looking for nowadays, and dare I walk down Bond Street in my one pair of fully-fashioned stockings? Perhaps, after all, my old garden slacks would be more what the true Londoner is wearing.

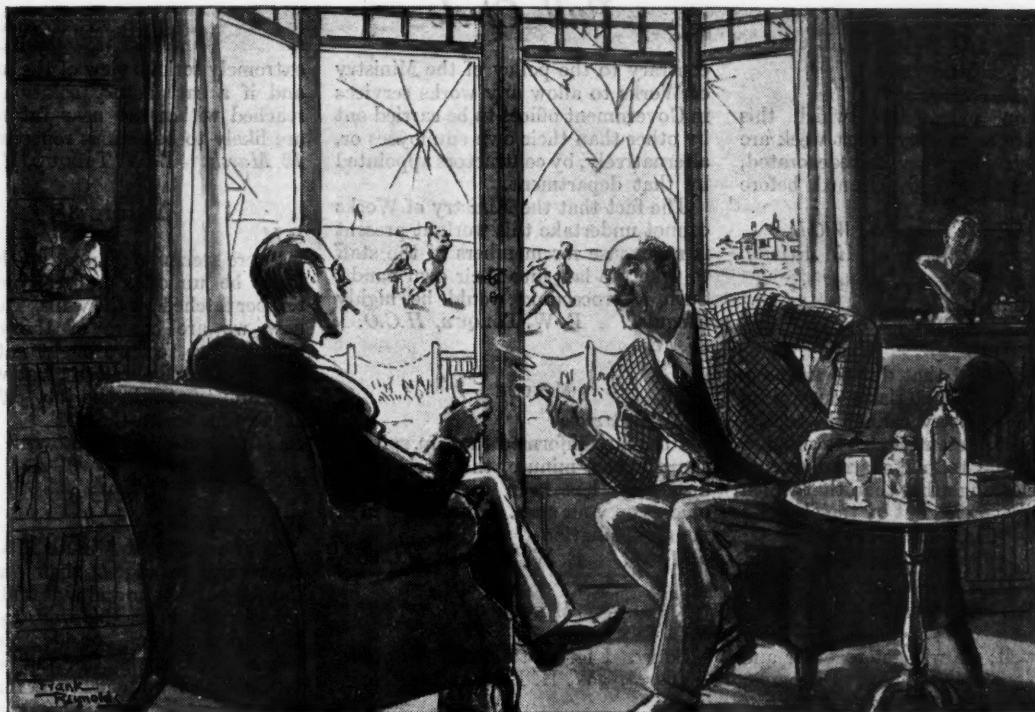
When I think about this visit in all its aspects I get so nervous that I almost think I won't go after all. But it is consoling to reflect that quite likely London will never even notice.

## Smoking

WHETHER Alamein and Stalin-grad will be ranked among the decisive battles of the world will no doubt depend on the skill with which Mr. Attlee and Mr. Stalin manage to preserve a world which retains enough vitality to study such matters, but there can be little doubt that Sympson's attempts to reduce his daily average of cigarettes from his pre-war fifty a day (rising to a peak of seventy during the "blitz") to a mere twenty has rivalled most of the personal conflicts of ancient times. In Munton-on-Sea, unfortunately, there is no serious cigarette-shortage.

His motive in making the reduction is financial rather than moral, though faintly coloured by a futile wish to become "fit" which has haunted him for twenty years and has so far only resulted in two protracted spells in hospital—one as a result of the unexpected rebound of a patent exerciser in 1929, and the other as a result of taking his Kugombas for P.T. in the Sinai Desert during a sandstorm in 1942, when he was "accidentally" felled to earth by the whirling arms of a subversive character named Babongo Alongo.

"The great thing," he said to Edith,



*"It's wonderful. We always refuse to allow them to pay, but we keep the golf-balls."*

who is always glad to assist in reforming anybody, "is not to start too early in the morning. It has been well said that if you resist the first cigarette of the day you never smoke at all."

Unfortunately he found it quite impossible to rise from his bed before he had been strengthened by nicotine. Victory was his on the first day until 2 P.M., when it dawned on him that he was still in bed, and that unless he got up and did some work he would not be able to earn enough to pay even for his minimum of twenty cigarettes.

So he decided to allow himself one cigarette before rising, to give him strength to get up and cook his breakfast; another immediately after breakfast to give him strength to do the washing-up, and others at intervals of fifteen minutes until 11 A.M., when he was to knock off smoking completely until the evening.

This might have worked, but unfortunately there are three rooms in Sympson's flat, and each has a clock indicating a different time. Stubbing his first post-breakfast cigarette at 8.5 by the red alarm clock in the kitchen, he had only to walk into the library to find that it was already 8.20 by the

grandfather. This obviously entitled him to another cigarette at once, which expired at 8.30, when he hurried into the bedroom to make his bed and found to his delight that it was 8.45. On the imminent death of the third cigarette (at 8.55 by the bedroom cuckoo) he dashed into the kitchen, so that it was officially stubbed at 8.25, and he then only had to walk into the library to see if the fire was still burning, and to light a fourth cigarette at the legal 8.30 by the red alarm.

He next determined to give up cigarettes altogether and smoke a pipe, allowing himself three ounces of tobacco a week, but the tobacco was finished on the third day, and he conceived the devilish plan of putting in his pipe all the cigarette-stubs that were lying about in ash-trays and other places from his previous orgies. This gave him the brilliant idea that by combining cigarette-smoking and pipe-smoking he could manage very cheaply. Fifteen cigarettes a day and one ounce of tobacco a week, he reckoned, if his expired stubs were mixed with the ounce of pipe tobacco, should see him through.

Aided by a hint from a friend about

the advisability of putting a piece of potato in his pouch to prevent the tobacco going dry, he managed quite well for the first week under the new system, often absent-mindedly smoking his potato for long periods before noticing a peculiarity of flavour. His victory was largely due to the fact that the only pipe he possessed was a small one which constantly got stopped up, so that in the course of the day many pleasant hours were passed trying to clear the hole with matches and then trying to clear the matches with hairpins. Unfortunately one day in trying to clear the hairpin with a gimlet he split the pipe and could only purchase a very large one of the type smoked by the late Sherlock Holmes. Keeping this enormous furnace fed used up his tobacco-ration in a single day, and the undressed bodies of his week's ration of cigarettes hardly satisfied it on the second day, so he threw it into the sea.

He is now experimenting with the theory of a friend of his who says that if you smoke a constant chain of cigarettes day after day you will eventually develop a distaste for tobacco. Success has not so far attended his efforts, but, always game, he perseveres.

## Full Circle

### MINUTE 1

S.14

The new offices into which this Directorate is to move next week are very dirty. May they be redecorated, or at least thoroughly cleaned, before we go in, please?

W. H. BARROW, W/Cdr.

Deputy Director of Air Activity.  
18 Feb.

### MINUTE 2

W/Cdr. Barrow

It is regretted that due to shortage of labour and materials, decoration within the Ministry cannot be undertaken at the present time. It will also be impossible to make arrangements for any cleaning other than that which is normally carried out by the cleaning staff.

E. W. TORQUE,  
21 Feb. Higher Civilian Officer.

### MINUTE 3

S.14

Very well; we will get together and do the place up ourselves. Distemper is cheap enough, and we can borrow some brushes.

23 Feb. W. H. BARROW, W/Cdr.

### MINUTE 4

W/Cdr. Barrow

Your Minute 3.  
Whilst not unsympathetic towards the "Help Yourself" campaign, we are afraid we must enter a caveat against any such measure being taken, as it is

contrary to the policy of the Ministry of Works to allow any works services in Government offices to be carried out by other than their own employees or, alternatively, by contractors appointed by that department.

The fact that the Ministry of Works cannot undertake this work at present is no excuse for members of the staff to take the law into their own hands. Such a proceeding would be highly irregular. E. W. TORQUE, H.C.O.  
26 Feb.

### MINUTE 5

W/Cdr. Barrow

I am now informed that, in spite of the previous minute, the work under discussion has been carried out by officers on your staff. I shall be glad of your explanation.

5 March. E. W. TORQUE, H.C.O.

### MINUTE 6

S.14

Sorry. I forgot to cancel the order.  
7 March. W. H. BARROW, W/Cdr.

### MINUTE 7

W/Cdr. Barrow

On this subject I have received very strong representations from the Ministry of Works that the offices occupied by you, and recently redecorated, should be restored to their former condition until such time as the Ministry is able to deal with this matter. I may add that the Ministry take an

extremely serious view of the incident, and if a satisfactory solution is not reached within the near future there are likely to be serious repercussions.  
12 March. E. W. TORQUE, H.C.O.

### MINUTE 8

S.14

There seems no doubt that the work must be undone, and the new distemper fetched off the walls. However, now we are aware of the delicate position, we feel we ought not to do anything more ourselves, but wait for the Ministry to do the job. Will you get in touch with them?

16 March. W. H. BARROW, W/Cdr.

### MINUTE 9

W/Cdr. Barrow

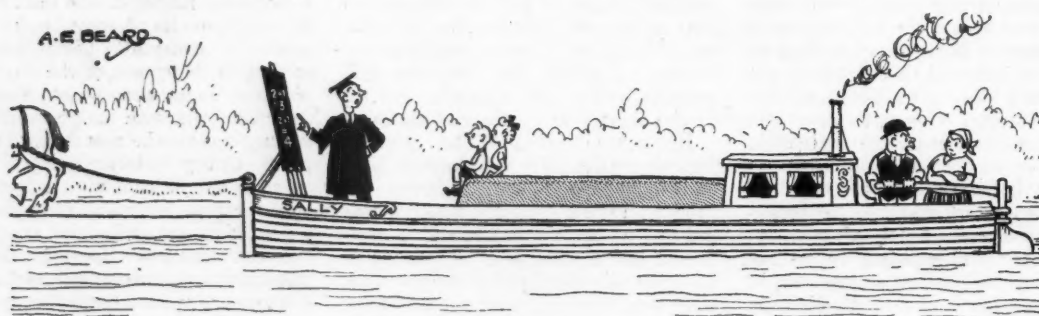
Your request at Minute 8 is noted. However, we regret that owing to shortage of labour and materials it will not be possible for this work to be put in hand for some considerable time. Nevertheless, the matter will be borne in mind and an endeavour made to effect removal of the distemper at some future date. Perhaps you will confirm that this arrangement is agreeable.

25 March. E. W. TORQUE, H.C.O.

### MINUTE 10

S.14

Perfectly. There's no hurry for a year or two; I'm having the file brought forward on 1st April, 1951.  
31 March. W. H. BARROW, W/Cdr.



"I dunno wot the country's coming to—we did all right without eddication in my young day."

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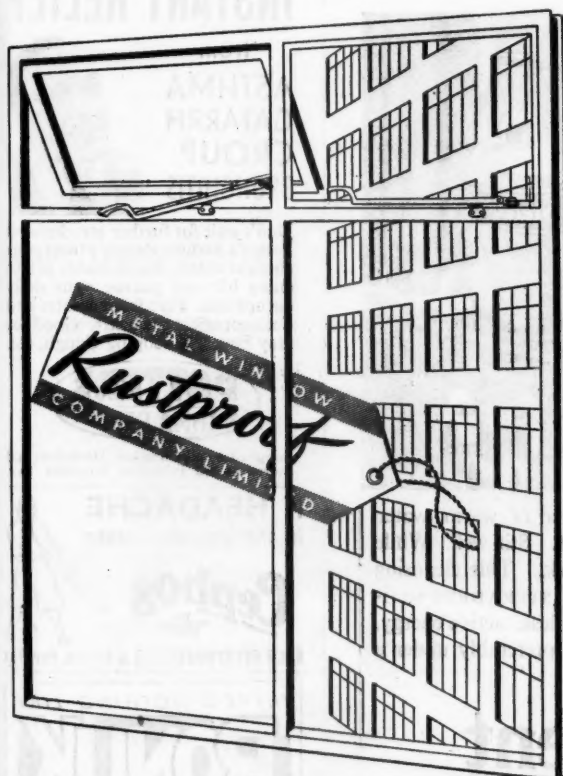


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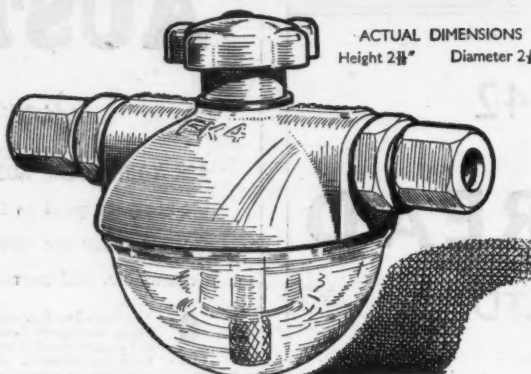
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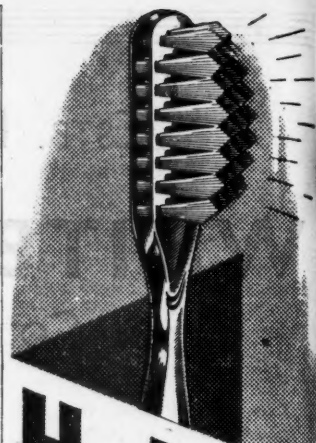
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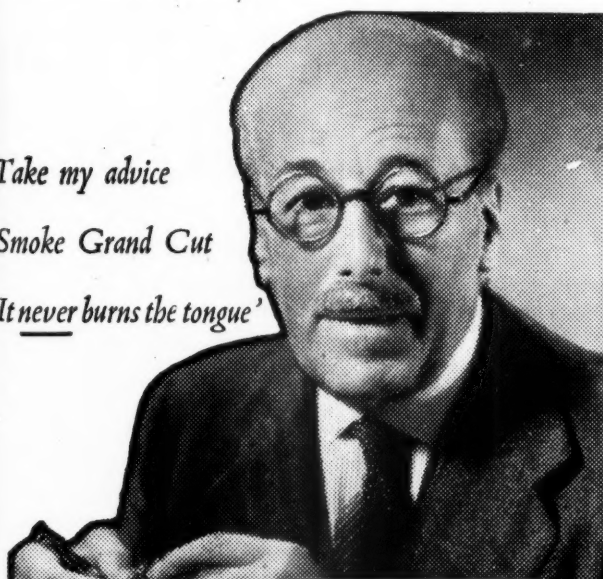
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